

Extramural Activities and their relationship with English as a foreign language

Internetese versus standard English?

Extramural activities are those taking place outside of the 'walls' of the language classroom → anything a language learner does for fun in their free time (cf. Sundqvist, 2009, p. 24)



- Both **comprehensible input** (cf. Krashen, 1976, 1993) and **comprehensible output** (cf. Swain, 1985) are valuable for language learners
- Most entertainment activities are receptive, e.g., watching TV or reading (cf. Pearson, 2004); less proficient learners also make less use of extramural activities in the TL (cf. Pearson, 2004)
- De Wilde et al. (2020) found **three activities** to be most fruitful: **gaming, social media, speaking English** → all interactive activities
- Social Networking Services (SNS) may raise learners' critical thinking skills, heighten their language comprehension, and help them acquire vocabulary (cf. Faryadi, 2017), increase willingness to communicate and use the TL (cf. Bailey & Almusharraf, 2021), or writing fluency (cf. Dzion, 2016)
- Great benefits of watching material with captions for understanding form-meaning connection & language comprehension in general (cf. Peters, Heynen & Puimège, 2016; Peters & Webb, 2018)
- However, learners will express themselves **differently** on the internet than they do in "instructionally designed language teaching and learning practices in schools" (Lantz-Andersson, Vigmo & Bowen, 2013., p. 294) and there have been concerns regarding micro-blogging platform Twitter: users **sacrifice proper grammar and spelling** in order to get messages across in fewer characters (cf. Sirucek, 2009)

Internetese?

- Netspeak; textism; textese → Angel (2022) explored whether textese/internetese has a set rule of grammar parallel to standard English and finds: yes, it does!
- Textese can therefore be seen as a **variety of English**, but it is "more creative and cannot really be mapped 1-to-1 onto standard English" (Angel, 2022)
- Research indicates that texting either has **no impact** or a **positive impact** on written and spoken language (Rosel, 2019, p. 54)
- Internetese is currently the most prevalent medium for **intercultural communication** (Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008)
- Chen, Huang & Luo (2020) find positive impact of high internetese experiences and **word recognition abilities**



Study

Research question: What effect do extramural activities have on German EFL's vocabulary in productive writing?

Hypothesis: The English learned online when doing extramural activities is another variety than the one used in the classroom, thus, no large effects on lexical diversity can be found in their writing

Methodology

- Survey with questions on extramural activities (types, intensity) + confidence and attitude towards English
- Corpus of argumentative texts written for recent exams, use of Lexical Frequency Profiles (cf. Laufer & Nation 1995) + British native essay corpus (cf. LOCNESS) as comparison
- DCT task: "Imagine you're messaging a close friend a secret that nobody else can know"

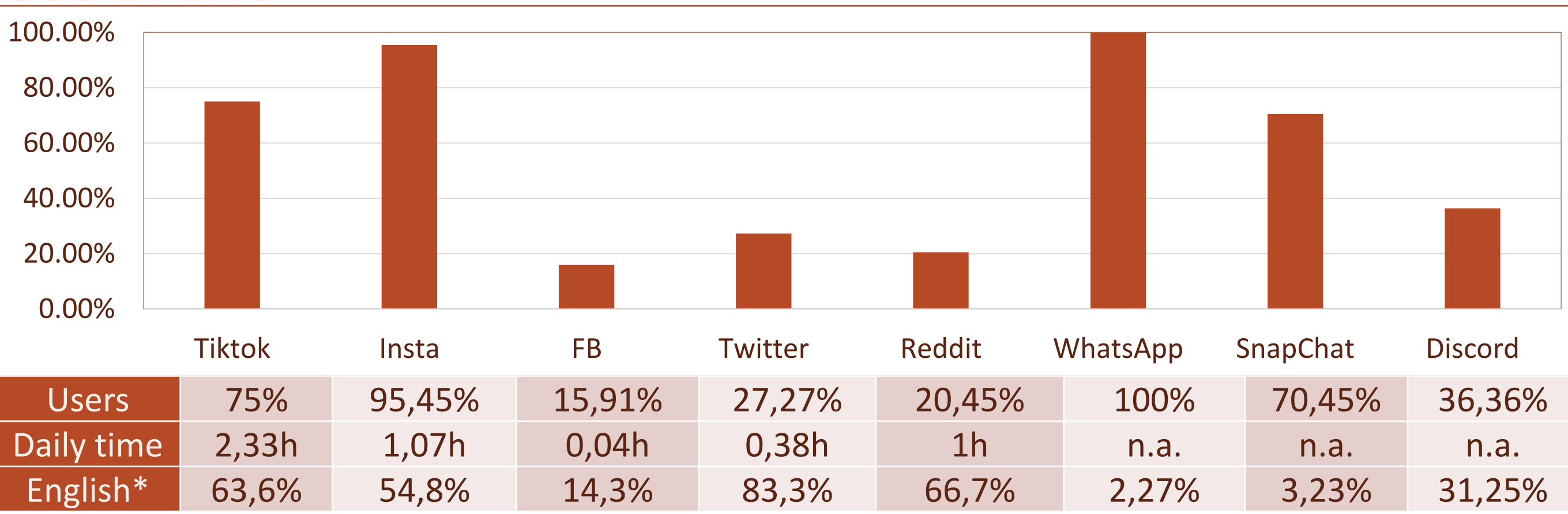
About the pupils

- 43 students from grades 10, 11 and 12 from a German "Gymnasium"
- Ages 14 to 18, M=17.77

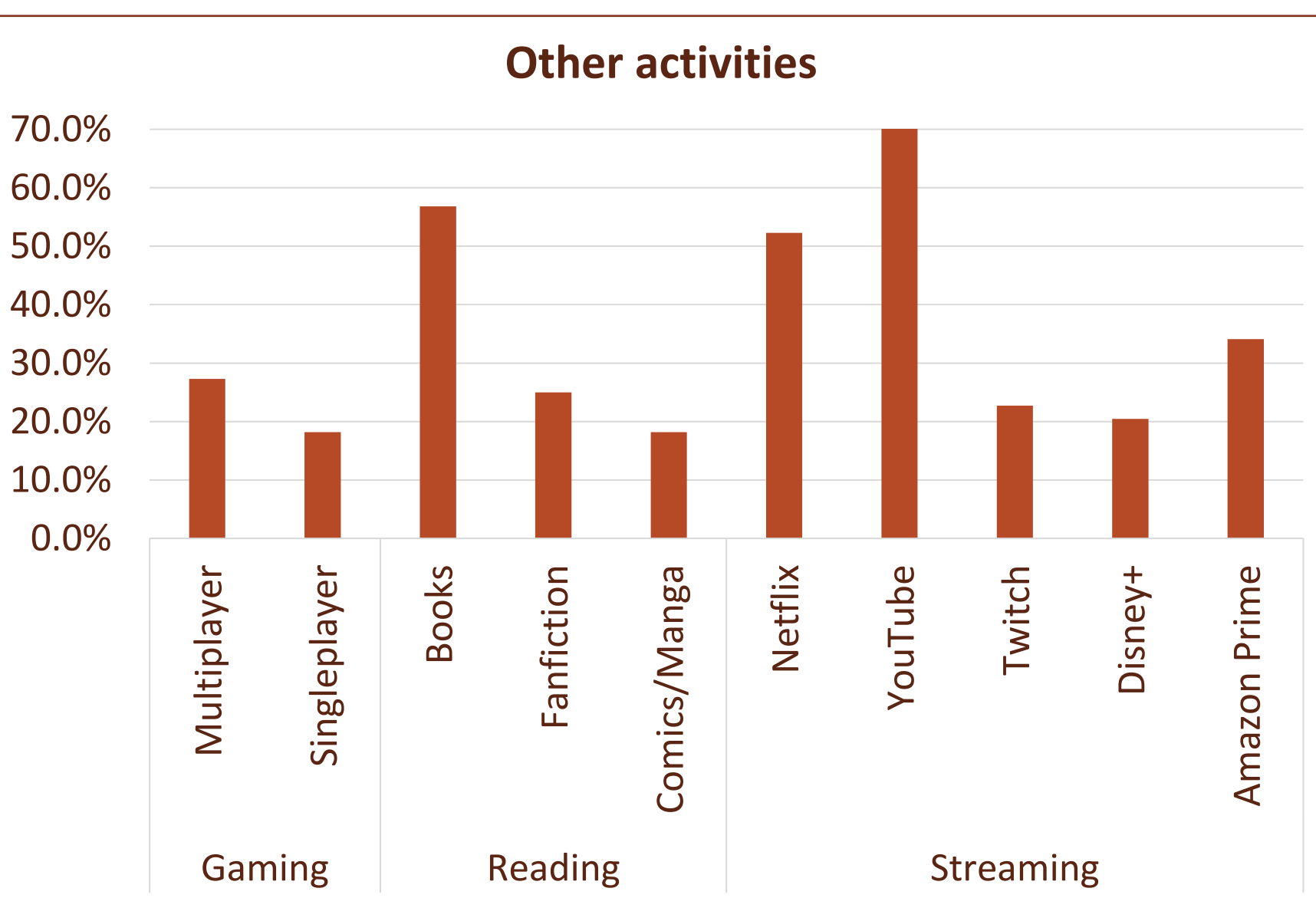
	Writing	Listening	Speaking	Reading
	7,21	7,86	7,32	8,58
	1,44 (SD)	1,5 (SD)	1,5 (SD)	1,04 (SD)

Table 1: Confidence in English skills (1 to 10 Likert-Scale)

Use of SNS



*indicated as 'always' or 'often'

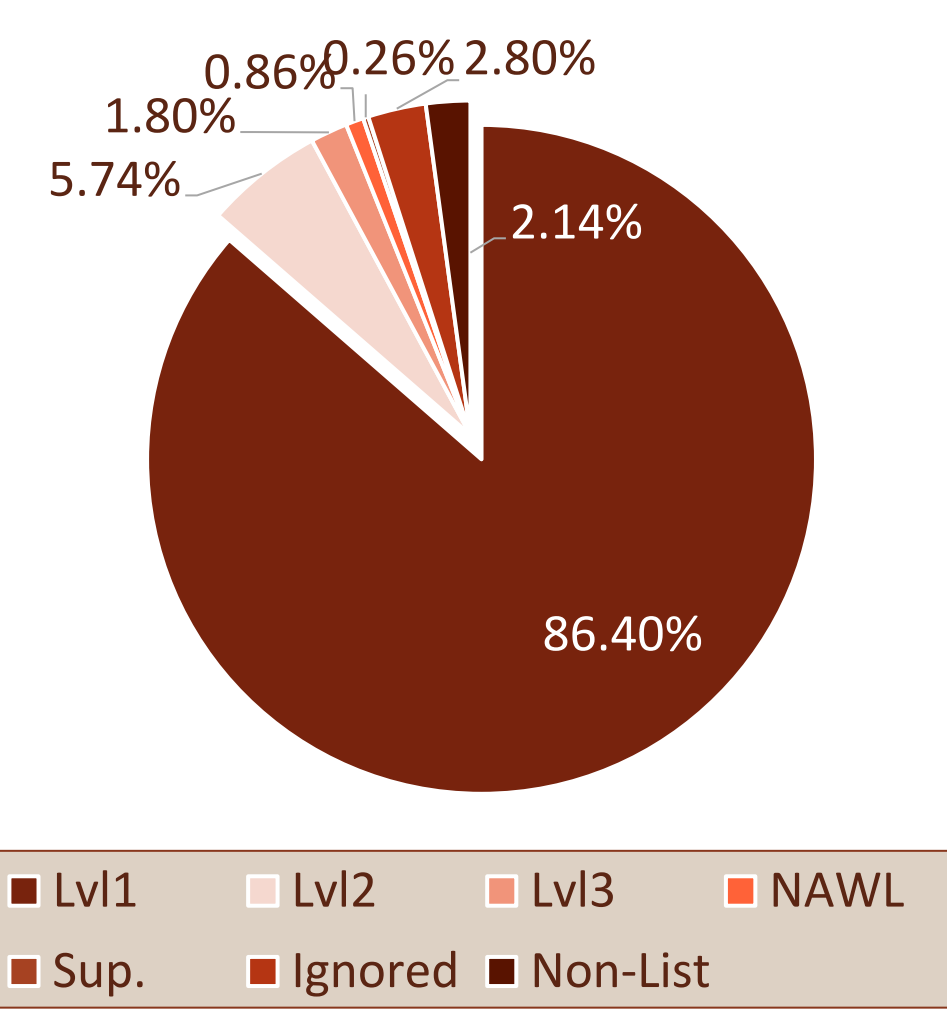


Comments made in survey:

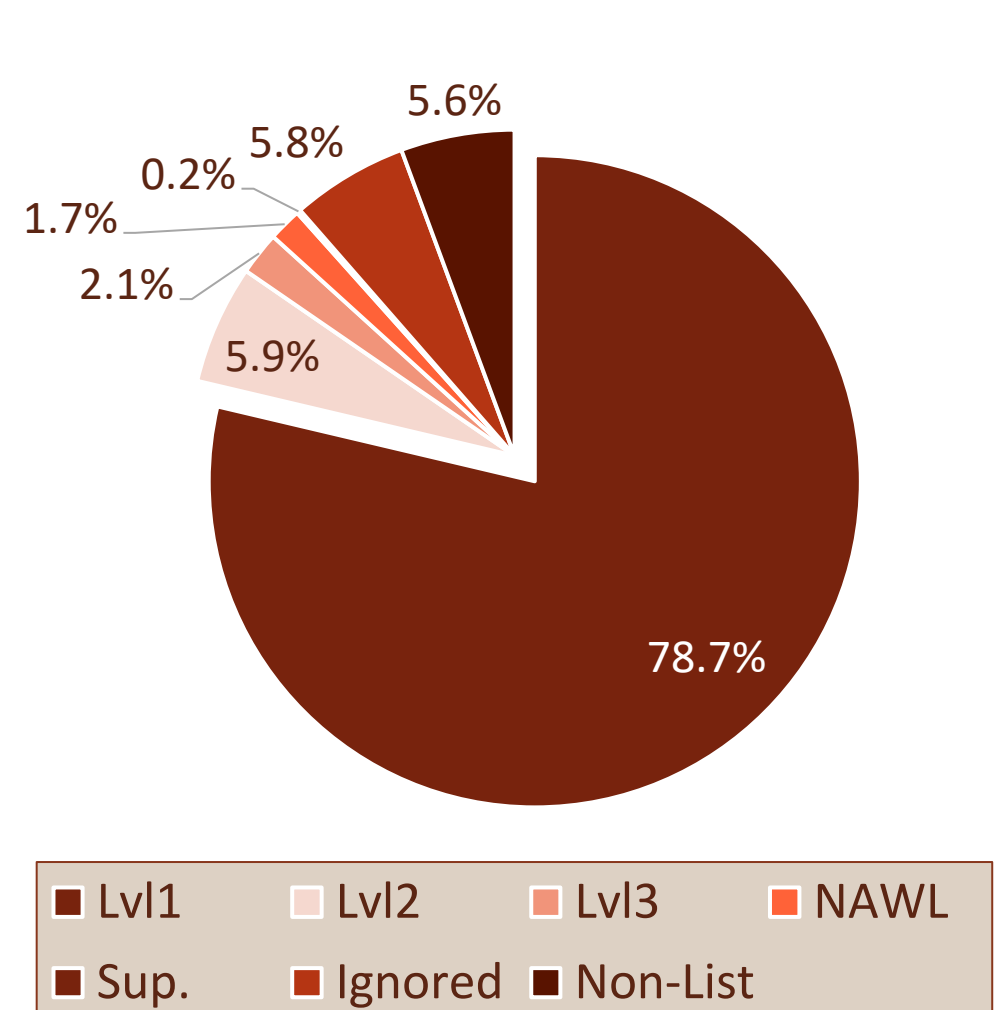
- "I honestly use English more often and all the videos I've watched helped me to build up confidence to speak English, understand English and to read in English but sadly my writing skills do not get better, but my vocabulary does!!"
- "I think I've learned more English because of Social Media than in school, tbh."
- "I am certain that my English skills are great only because I spent way too much time watching English content on Youtube in primary school."

LFP results

German pupils' average LFP



British Native students' average LFP LOCNESS corpus, n = 33



Lower scores for Lvl1 and higher scores for the other levels as well as Non-List items is desired → shows greater use of diverse vocabulary

VS.

Lvl1 score, p < 0.05 Significant

ACCUMULATED ACTIVITIES, CATEGORIZED FROM LOW TO HIGH

	Lvl1	Lvl2	Lvl3	NAWL ¹	Sup. ²	Ignored ³	Non-List	TC ⁴	p = 0,373 No statistical significance
Low	87,11%	5,28%	1,56%	1,08%	0,22%	3,26%	1,46%	98,54%	¹ New Academic Word List ² Supplemental (numbers, months, etc.) ³ Ignored items such as proper names ⁴ Token coverage
Mean + SD	4,13%	1,38%	0,76%	1,22%	0,22%	1,85%	0,78%	0,76%	
Mid	86,63%	5,12%	1,87%	0,78%	0,19%	2,97%	2,45%	97,56%	
Mean + SD	3,39%	1,72%	0,88%	0,84%	0,26%	1,56%	1,58%	1,59%	
High	85,08%	6,88%	2,26%	0,72%	0,34%	2,17%	2,53%	97,43%	
Mean + SD	2,91%	1,26%	0,46%	0,67%	0,30%	0,96%	1,34%	1,34%	

Categorization into pupils who do a lot of productive activities (e.g., texting) and those who do not → *no statistical significance*

Variable selection with Boruta in R Studio also shows no variables among productive activities, receptive activities, confidence and attitude towards English that predict Lvl1 scores or number of non-list items

→ Extramural activities do therefore not seem to predict use of diverse vocabulary in school writing, as stated in the hypothesis

How can we measure the effect of extramural activities on internetese if there is no proper standard?

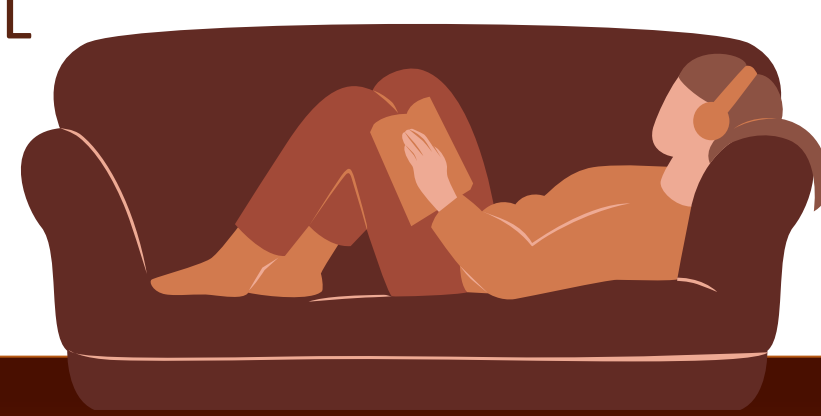
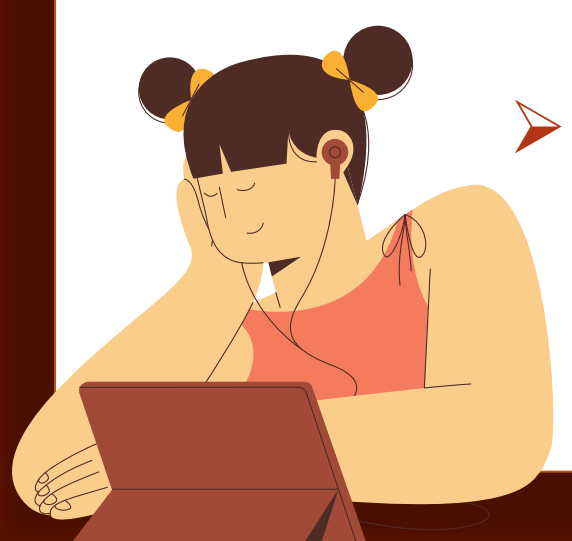
- ✓ Of the 37 students who provided a DCT message, 20 of them exhibited **very confident use of Internetese** (use of acronyms, English/internet slang, etc.).

What they have in common:

- ✓ Higher (average) confidence in English skills
- ✓ Game less, watch more English content
- ✓ Spend more time on SNS and text more in English
- ✓ Read more, especially **fanfiction**

Results + Conclusion

- Hypothesis tested negatively: extensive extramural activities in English do not predict more diverse use of vocabulary in text production (in school tasks)
- In the exam task where they were supposed to write an e-mail to a supposed pen pal, some students made **use of informal text features/netspeak** → internet tasks mean netspeak to pupils?
- Researchers plead for **more regular inclusion of netspeak in class** to explore the possibilities of the English language (cf. Santos, 2012, Thangaraj & Maniam, 2015) → students relate to this more as it is what they see and use in their free time
- In the comment section, many say they learned receptive skills but cannot translate into the productive area (as shown by discrepancy in **confidence writing vs. reading**)
- They also report more effects on knowing slang, colloquial language and how to behave in internet spaces than effects on their school writing
- LFPs do not show the **full extent of difference in quality** in the essays – the overall quality differs greatly and not just based on lexical diversity; some pupils also show greater **intercultural or topical knowledge**, apart from their lexical diversity → exploration of data with measures pertaining to overall writing skills?
 - Confidence in English stems more from successful communication especially online rather than successful writing in the classroom
 - **What now?** Comparison with existent German EFL corpus → is there a development over time (from non-internet times to now?)



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